



Carew International Research Reveals Economic Pressure and Buyer Access as the Defining Sales Challenges of 2026

New report identifies five themes shaping sales performance across industries, with economic pressure and buyer access emerging as the most-cited challenges.

CINCINNATI, OH, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Carew International today released *The Challenges Shaping Sales Performance in 2026*, a new research report exploring the biggest challenges facing today's sales teams.

The report asked sales professionals one simple question:

What is the single biggest challenge facing sales teams today?

Responses from sales professionals, sales leaders, consultants, executives, and business professionals across North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia revealed five consistent themes shaping sales performance in 2026.

Key Findings

Economic Pressure (37%)

Pricing volatility, budget freezes, freight costs, raw material scarcity, and general market uncertainty were cited more frequently than any other challenge.

Prospecting and Buyer Access (33%)

Getting appointments, reaching decision-makers, breaking through to buyers who are already committed elsewhere, and turning initial outreach into meaningful conversations.

Change Management and Shifting Priorities (11%)

Rapidly changing customer priorities, evolving market conditions, and the challenge of selling into uncertainty.

Sales Management, Coaching, and Accountability (9%)

Managers disconnected from frontline customer conversations, inconsistent coaching, and difficulty reinforcing effective sales behaviors.

Mindset, Motivation, and Sales Culture (7%)

Growing distraction, short-term thinking, and declining focus that make sustained sales performance increasingly difficult.

Despite widespread attention surrounding artificial intelligence, very few respondents identified AI as their primary challenge. Instead, the findings point to a sales environment where economic conditions, buyer behavior, leadership effectiveness, and relationship-building remain the defining factors driving performance.

The comments themselves illustrate the reality many sales teams are facing.

"Customers feel they have to skimp like crazy. The economy is going in the trash - that's for everyone."

Sales Representative · Nursery and Agriculture Industry

On the challenge of maintaining focus and motivation, another respondent observed:

"The greatest threat to sales culture is apathy. In the marketplace, in work, in our culture - driven by short-form content and short-burst dopamine."

Sales Consultant · Horticulture and Nursery Industry

Said Anna Luther, Director of Marketing at Carew International, "The most interesting finding is how consistently people from different industries, countries, and roles described the same challenges. Whether someone sells industrial equipment, healthcare solutions, or professional services, they're navigating many of the same realities. We wanted this report to identify problems and also help sales leaders start better conversations with their teams."

Beyond summarizing the research, the report includes practical actions sales leaders can implement immediately, discussion questions for team meetings, and recommendations for addressing each of the five themes.

The complete State of Sales Leadership 2026 report is available at: <https://www.carew.com/state-of-sales-leadership-2026/>

About Carew International

For more than 50 years, Carew International has helped organizations improve sales performance, strengthen leadership, and build lasting customer relationships. Its programs, including Dimensions of Professional Selling[®], Positional Prospecting[™], Excellence in Sales Leadership[™], and Excellence in Customer Service[™], are built on the belief that lasting performance improvement comes from behavior change.

Carew International has been recognized by Selling Power as a Top Sales Training Company for

14 consecutive years and has been named to Training Industry's Top 20 Sales Training Companies list.

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